



NATALIE BABBITT

"I write for children because I am interested in fantasy and the possibilities for experience of all kinds before the time of compromise. I believe that children are far more perceptive and wise than American books give them credit for being."

Natalie Babbitt, a resident of Providence, Rhode Island, is a writer and illustrator of award-winning children's books. During her childhood, she spent most of her time drawing and reading fairy tales and myths. Her mother, an amateur landscape and portrait painter, gave Natalie art lessons. She grew up wanting only to be an illustrator. Natalie studied art at Laurel School in Cleveland and at Smith College. In 1966, Natalie and her husband collaborated on a children's book called *The Forty-ninth Magician* -- he wrote it and she illustrated it. With encouragement from their editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Natalie continued producing children's books even after her husband became too busy to write the stories. *Tuck Everlasting* won the American Library Association's Notable Book Award and the Christopher Award for juvenile fiction in 1976.

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Tuck Everlasting

By Natalie Babbitt

Doomed to-or blessed with-eternal life after drinking from a magic spring, the Tuck family wanders about trying to live as inconspicuously and comfortably as they can. When ten-year old Winnie Foster stumbles onto their secret, the Tucks take her home and explain why living forever at one age is less a blessing than it might seem. The Tuck family is also confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that in addition to Winnie Foster, a malicious stranger now shares their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing older.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think the title means? What kinds of things are "everlasting"?
2. How long has the Tuck family stayed the same? How has this affected their lives? What would you do if you could live forever? What would you miss if you stayed at one age forever?
3. What is Winnie afraid of when she is planning on running away? What does she do with her fears?
4. How does Winnie feel when she is kidnapped? In what way is this kidnapping unusual? Why is it so important to the Tucks that Winnie keeps their secret?
5. Who is the stranger, and what does he want? Is he an honest person? Would you trust him? Do you think what he plans to do with the spring water is fair?
6. What does Jesse ask Winnie to do when she turns seventeen? What would you do if you were in her shoes?
7. Winnie risks everything to help the Tuck family, why? How does she do this? Are her actions right or wrong? How does her family react?

Resources referenced:

kidsreads.com, teenreads.com, bookrags.com, teachingbooks.com, multcolib.org, barnesandnoble.com,
And MPL Staff.